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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to meet the needs of the Baylor University college community, the staff of the Counseling Center cooperated with the Radio Department in developing a weekly 15-minute radio program which addressed itself to the probelms of students. By means of interviews with campus personnel and questions solicited from listeners, the program covered a wide variety of problems that were of interest to the student population. Although the program ran for two and one half years, no systematic evaluation of effectiveness or of media audience was conducted. However, anecdotal reports of clients and listeners indicated a wide range of acceptance of the program. Presently, there are plans to revive the program with a new title and format, with strong consideration being given to videotaping programs for television presentation whenever possible. (Author)

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The Use of Campus Radio by The Counseling Center

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Running head: The Use of Campus Radio

Abstract

The staff of the Counseling Center cooperated with the Radio Department of the university in developing a weekly program which addressed itself to the problems of the students. Through this medium additional service was provided to those who needed counseling and the Counseling Center became more visable to the campus. Results of the program were judged favorably so that an expansion of this effort to a video tape program which would be broadcast on television is under consideration.

The Use of Campus RAdio by The Counseling Center

Upon receipt of the letter from Tom Magoon announcing the acceptance of this paper, I immediately experienced an anxiety attack associated with experiences of the past when I was asked to tell all that I knew about a given subject in a ridiculous time span such as seven minutes (the time so generously afforded me on this occasion).

It was during a September, 1968 staff meeting that the idea for a Counseling Center staff radio program first emerged. There was an intense effort among many counseling center staffs at that particular point in history to find a better means of meeting the needs of college campus communities. A term that was most popular at that particular time was "outreach." It was the effort to stretch the resources of the counseling center staff to areas above and beyond what was already being done that gave impetus to the innovation of developing a radio program. There was the intention that the program would focus upon the concerns and problems of college students and utilize the knowledge and expertise of psychology, and any other related resource, towards possible solutions of the same.

Baylor University had a Department of Radio which operated

a 10-watt educational FM radio station. A conference with the personnel of the Radio Department revealed a willingness to explore the possibility of a joint project. An undergraduate student who was majoring in oral communications with a concentration in radio was assigned the task of coordinating the developmental efforts. After several conferences a title of Citadel was agreed upon as the name of the program and a format of introduction and closing, with appropriate background music, was written and recorded. It was decided that the program should be fifteen minutes long. The thought was that a program of any shorter duration than fifteen minutes would be insufficient to address a problem. On the other hand, a thirty minute block of time could well become tedious and have a tendency to drag for both the listener and the producer. It was further determined that the fifteen minute program would be pre-recorded and scheduled for presentation at two different "prime-time" periods in the radio schedule. The taped closing of the weekly radio program solicited questions from listeners which would then be answered the next week. With these decisions made and implemented the program was initiated and ran for two and one half years.

The contents of the program varied by design. Specific

seasonal problems were discussed according to the climate of the campus at a particular time. There were occasions during the two and one half years that a series of two, three, or more programs were devoted to the development of a particular theme. Most of the time, however, the flexibility of weekly programming gave the opportunity of addressing a single problem that was of interest in the college population. Some of the problems that were recognized as recurring in this population were anxiety, depression, insomnia, suicide, interpersonal relations, family relations, and others which are indigenous to the young adults on university and college campuses. The campus calendar and events provided indications of the pressure points on students for program development at a given time. Interviews were scheduled on the program with students, faculty, administration, and community professionals thereby expanding the limits of the counseling center staff. There was never a paucity of problems for discussion or resources to consult for programming.

A systematic evaluation of effectiveness or of media audience was not conducted. Informally, antedotal reports of clients and listeners indicated a wide range of acceptance of the program. The general impression gained from the

observations of the professional staffs from the radio station and the counseling center was that the program was worthwhile and "on target" to the degree that the efforts were justified. Interestingly, many regular listeners came from the population beyond the limits of the campus and from all age groups throughout the 25 mile radius covered by the radio station's transmission.

The program was discontinued when the radio station closed to relocate and the transmission was discontinued for several months. It is presently planned that the program will be revived with a new title and format. There is strong consideration being given to videotaping programs for television presentation when it is possible. Enthusiasm for the continuance of this vehicle for service and outreach is shared by the Radio and Television Department as well as the counseling center staff. The fact that busy professionals would be willing to continue investing energies in a task would suggest there is a basis for positive evaluation of this effort beyond the fact that many individuals derive self-gratification by hearing their voices broadcast.